WHIRRAKEE

November 2009 Vol. 30 No. 10

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO

FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with a 10 minute thing-of-the night natural history segment. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Bob Ruddick, Ben Goonan, Liz Graham, Glenise Moors, Joy Clusker, Gemma Candy

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one sub-group (the Fauna Study Group) and is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5449 3479 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 30, No. 10, November 2009

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
The only thing that can be said as this edition goes to print is, what a fantastic spring we have had. The extensive observations, reports and long lists of plants and birds in this issue confirm this.

Front Page Illustration – Photographer: Joy Clusker (crane flies) and Jase (Twining Fringe Lily)

Images of our glorious Spring…
The left image shows a mating pair of crane flies. It was taken on one of the Great Dividing Trail excursion at Kangaroo Gully on 17 October. There were a number of these mating pairs along the trail – how often would the average person get a chance to see a close-up of such flies, let alone at such a special moment? Have a look at their heads, how amazing! The Twining Fringe Lily, *Thysanotus patersonii*, (on the right) has a tiny, but ever so beautiful flower, a bit over 5mm across. Its stem and leaves are very inconspicuous, so when it winds itself around small shrubs and herbs, the delicate little flowers appear in unexpected places to a passer-by. I don't know who the pollinator of this little lily is, but the anthers look a bit like buzz-pollination might be involved. If you have any suggestions or first - hand observations, please let me know (ed).

Short notices

New General Meeting Starting Time
To better meet the needs of members, the doors to the clubrooms will be open from 7:10 pm onwards. Members are requested to arrive in time to be seated by 7:30 pm when the meeting will start.
This will enable all the essential parts of the meeting - thing of the night, the speaker, observations & general business to be concluded by 9:30pm.

Garden Working Bee

A garden working bee has been organized for Saturday 7th November at 9am, to deal with some more of the weeds.

In December, we might have a combined hall and garden working bee, but details have not been worked out, so stay tuned.

Working bees usually go for a couple of hours (including a cuppa), though people are welcome to give whatever time they can and if they could bring gloves, secateurs, handweeding tools etc. that would be helpful. I usually bring bags and a ute to put the weeds in.

Matt Comer

Valuing the environment – have your say
What do you value in your local environment? Why do you value these places or things? The North Central Catchment Management Authority is seeking your views on the region's most valued environmental 'assets' to help prioritise future environmental funding and works.

"The North Central CMA is working with the local community and other stakeholders to develop a six-year Regional Catchment Strategy," said North Central CMA Chief Executive Officer, Damian Wells. "The first part of this process is to find out what people value in their local environment and why they value these places and things."

A series of community meetings will (or have been) held throughout the next three months to work with the regional community to identify local environmental values. This will include a meeting in Bendigo on 11 November linking in with the Bendigo Field Naturalists.

"The meeting in Bendigo is one of a series of meetings being held throughout North Central Victoria to identify the region's most valued environmental places. This is part of a new process, and we will start with a blank sheet," said Mr Wells.

"The environmental sites that are identified through these community meetings will become part of a regional list used by North Central CMA and others to build projects and seek funding. There are limited funds available to protect and improve these environmental places and things, so we need to think about how we can get the best results with the limited funding available.

"Projects in some areas will be funded in the near future; others may not receive immediate funding. However, by including them on a list, we may be able to leverage various funding opportunities over the coming years," concluded Mr Wells.

The Bendigo community meeting will be held (in partnership with BFNC and the Bendigo Sustainability Group) before the monthly Bendigo Field Naturalists Meeting, at the Senior Citizens Club Rooms in Golden Square, **Wednesday 11 November from 5pm–7pm (including supper)**. For further information or to confirm your attendance, please contact the North Central CMA, ph: 5448 7124, email: info@nccma.vic.gov.au or visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au

Please distribute this notice throughout your networks, so we have as many people as possible come to the Bendigo meeting.

Note, reports and observations from the October General Meeting

Recorded by Jan/Rod Orr

Thing of the Night

Matthew Comer showed digital photos of several of the very interesting, but very small plants that had been noticed during recent Club Excursions. He encouraged us all to take more notice of these tiny plants, which are surprisingly common and widespread, but usually overlooked because they are so small.

Editor's additions:

Some of the plants Matthew showed us have great names like, Small Wrinklewort, *Siloxerus multiflorus*, Tiny Pennywort and Austral Carrot. He also showed us some tiny *Brachyscome* species (e.g *B.perpusilla*), Soft Millotia, *Millotia tenuifolia*, Tiny Blue-bell, *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, Australian Stonecrop, *Crassula sieberiana* (often has a distinctive reddish colour – why?). A picture of Spoon Cudweed, *Stuartina muelleri*, showed it growing around an ants nest – is this because of the loose soil there, or due to ants gathering its seeds? A good little project…

There was also a small *Ranunculus* species, and Pink Purslane. In one square meter, you can find quite a big variety of these small plants. Sometimes they are more common in places where there has been a disturbance, but not necessarily, some grow in undisturbed, intact environments too. The more you look, the more you find! If you want to see these tiny plants, Matthew's advice was to go on the next Great Dividing Trail excursion (see diary page for dates and details).

Announcements, Notes & Reports

Wellsford Photo Competition for Primary Schools

Ian Magee thanked the BFNC members for their support and for their help with school groups visiting the Wellsford Forest.

Lockwood PS & Marong PS will visit the Wellsford Forest on Friday 16/10 at 9:30 am

Eaglehawk PS will visit the Wellsford Forest on Tuesday 20/10 at 9:30 am. Camp Hill PS at 1pm.

Garden Weeding

Matthew Comer suggested that extra days will be needed to get on top of our weed problem - next Wednesday before the Committee Meeting (5 - 6 pm); Saturday November 7 is the next official Weeding Morning.

SEANA 2010 (15 - 18 October)

Advance Notice - based at Foster (Camp Rhumba), Wilsons Prom. Excursions planned.

Grampians SEANA Campout Report - Jane Cleary

Cassidy's Gap

Geology excursion to look at Fluvial Sandstone with examples of:

- Cross Bedding from braided stream systems
- Distorted Bedding and shearing off of one layer over another
- Case Hardening as a result of weathering
- Slumping

Sandstone appeared to be formed from coarse grains of mostly Quartz. Where it was visible, it was almost white in colour.

Mt Abrupt walk to the Summit

This set out as a Geology excursion, but with so many flowers encountered, it took 1 hour to travel the first kilometer! We then knuckled down to the task in hand and climbed to the summit.

On the descent we side-tracked to see the route originally taken to the top - a very steep route up a gorge which would have been damp and very slippery in wet conditions.

Plant List

Some plants were not named - there was just too much to look at!

Amperea xiphoclada - Broom Spurge
Astroloma conostephioides - Flame Heath
Astrotrichia asperifolia - Rough Star-hair
Banksia marginata - Silver Banksia
Brachyloma daphnoides - Daphne Heath
Callitris rhomboidea - Oyster-bay Pine
Calytrix alpestris - Snow Myrtle (some with galls)
Casuarina muellerana - Slaty Sheoak
Caustis pentandra - Thick Twist-rush
Caustis restiacea - Slender Twist-rush

Chamaescilla corymbosa - Blue Squills
Clematis aristata – Austr. Clematis (fruiting)
Comesperma volubile - Love Creeper
Conospermum patens - Slender Smoke-bush
C. mitchellii – Victorian Smoke-bush
Correa reflexa - Common Correa
Daviesia brevifolia - Leafless Bitter-pea
Dillwynia glaberrima - Smooth Parrot-pea
Dillwynia sericea - Showy Parrot-pea
Drosera peltata - Pale Sundew
Drosera spathulata - Rosy Sundew
Drosera whittakeri - Scented Sundew
Epacris impressa - Common Heath
Eucalyptus aromaphloia - Scentbark
Eucalyptus baxteri - Brown Stringybark
Eucalyptus camaldulensis - River Red Gum
Gompholobium ecostatum - Downy Wedge-pea
Goodenia sp.
Grevillea aquifolium - Variable Prickly
Grevillea
Grevillea dimorpha - Flame Grevillea
(beautiful)
Hakea rostrata - Beaked Hakea
Hakea sericea -Silky Hakea
Hibbertia fasciculata - Bundled Guinea-flower
Hibbertia sericea - Silky Guinea-flower
Hibbertia virgata - Twiggy Guinea-flower
Isopogon ceratophyllus - Hoary Conebush
Kennedia prostrata - Running Postman
Leptospermum sp. - Teatree
Leucopogon virgatus - Common Beard-heath
Lomandra filiformis - Wattle Mat-rush
Lomandra glauca - Pale Mat-rush
Microseris scapigera - Yam Daisy
Pimelea linifolia - Tall Rice-flower
Platylobium obtusangulum - Common Flat-pea
Pultenea mollis - Soft Bush-pea
Restio tetraphyllis - Tassel Cord-rush
Stackhousia monogyna - Creamy Candles
Stackhousia viminea – Slender Stackhousia
Stylidium soboliferum - Bristly Trigger plant
Stypandra glauca - Nodding Blue Lily
Tetratheca ciliata - Pink Bells
Thysanotus patersonii - Twining Fringe-lily
Xanthorrhoea australis - Austral Grass-tree
Caladenia angustata - Musky Caladenia
Caladenia catenata - Pink Fingers
Caladenia clavigera - Plain-lip Spider Orchid
Caladenia dilatata - Green-comb Spider Orchid
Caladenia patersonii - Common Spider Orchid
Diuris longifolia - Wallflower Orchid
Glossodia major - Waxlip Orchid
Pterostylis nutans - Nodding Greenhood
Pterostylis sp. (spent flowers)
Thelymitra antennifera - Rabbit's Ears
Asplenium flabellifolium - Necklace Fern

Sunraysia FNC 60th Anniversary September 12 & 13 2009 - Report by Jane Cleary

We drove up the Calder Highway on a hot, windy and dusty Friday afternoon. Passing through the bush South of Hattah the mallee trees were beginning to put out new growth in the areas recently burnt. Standing vertically above the trees in areas burnt more than 30 years ago are a few Bell-fruit trees (*Codonocarpus cotinifolius*) some of which carry fruits (unisexual flowers may be carried on separate trees). The Bell-fruit and Wheel-fruit (*Gyrostemnon*) both belong in the Family Gyrostemonaceae and appear to germinate readily following fire but they are not long lived trees.

Saturday 12th was hot, windy and dusty with temperature to 34°C.

Bird List (Sewerage Farm)
Hoary-headed Grebe
Australasian Grebe
Pelican
Greater Cormorant
White-faced Heron
Intermediate Egret
Sacred Ibis
Yellow-billed Spoonbill
Black Swan
Freckled Duck
Australian Shelduck
Pacific Black Duck
Grey Teal
Australian Shoveller
Pink-eared Duck
Hardhead
Blue-billed Duck (many)
Musk Duck
Black Kite
Whistling Kite
Marsh Harrier
Hobby

Eurasian Coot
Masked Lapwing
Red-kneed Dotterel
Black-winged Stilt
Silver Gull
Crested Pigeon
Red-rumped Parrot
Welcome Swallow
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Rufous Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Willy Wagtail
Superb Fairy-wren
Variegated Fairy-wren
Brown Treecreeper
White-plumed Honeyeater
White-winged Chough
Magpie lark
Masked Woodswallow
Dusky Woodswallow
Raven

Australian Inland Botanic Garden
(additions to previous day's list)
Peaceful Dove
Rufous Songlark
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
White-fronted Honeyeater
Black Honeyeater
Pied Honeyeater
Zebra Finch
Little Raven

These are excellent gardens to visit, having an area of natural bushland to which has been added some indigenous flowering plants. The area of flowering Eremophilas is a great attraction for nectar-feeding birds and worthy of a visit in Springtime. The extensive grassland areas have been planted with trees, shrubs and flowers, both indigenous and exotic. In all areas the bird life is both seen and heard.

Observations

Glenise Moors
Striated Pardalotes bred last year in drill holes in the sandstone walls but this year (12/10/2009) a couple of Striated Pardalotes were noticed entering a box which John Burtonclay made 26 years ago. This is the first time they have used the box (John commented that his guarantees sometimes don't take effect immediately).

Powerful Owl was calling near their house at around 10 pm on 28/10/09. Three Welcome Swallows have fledged. The Grey Shrike thrush decided to leave its first nest and built in the carport where it is less likely to be preyed on by the Brown Goshawk.

Annette & Crawford Mouat
A Pacific Black-duck nested somewhere in the fenced garden and on 14/10/09, she was observed walking around the garden with 9 tiny ducklings following her. The mother duck seems quite tame - possibly, she is the same one that visited regularly in 2003 & 2004 and nested each time on the ground beside the house.

Elaine Doling
On 15/9/2009 at 11:25 am, 6 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were seen heading West over Green Street, California Gully.
On 25/9/2009 at lunchtime about 20 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were seen flying over Rosalind Park.
On 11/10/2009 at 10:20 am about 20 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos were seen flying South over California Gully.
An odd-coloured Eastern Rosella was seen twice among the resident group at home. Black feathers seem to be replaced by an olive brown colour.

Matthew Comer
On 13/10/2009 one Black-tailed Native Hen was seen at the Tannery Lane Nursery - a small number were in this area a few years ago.
Tom Burton also reported this bird from Tannery Lane on the 15/10/2009 (ed.)

David McInnes
On 26/9/2009 at Melvilles Caves (lower picnic grounds) David observed a White-headed Sittella in a gum tree. Kerrie Norris has added the following comments concerning David's observation:

Unfortunately the bird did not sit around long enough for a photograph. Despite returning at a later date David didn't see the bird again. Because this species (Varied Sittella race 'leucocephala') seems to be 'out of area' for Melvilles Caves, David wonders whether anybody else has sighted it. Please contact the Editor of *Whirrakee* if this bird has been seen and David will then be contacted by phone.

Anne Bridley
On 14/10/2009 at Cootamundra Place, Junortoun, about 10 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flew past. They had been in the area for the last 3 weeks. White-browed Woodswallows are present as well. Also noticed was a long strip of bark removed from a Grey Box - this was thought (by some members) to have been caused by a Kangaroo rather than by Tuans or Galahs.

Nathan has observed ~ 150 Fairy Martins; Pallid Cuckoo; and several bird species nesting.

Maurie Lewis
On 14/10/2009 at Vains Street, Golden Square were 2 pair of White-eared Honeyeaters nesting and 2 pair of Eastern Rosellas nesting, with young.

John Burtonclay
Reported sightings of 2 Swift Parrots at Horsham (and many other birds).

Jane Cleary
Reported seeing 2 Black-tailed Native Hens at Lake Weeroona and that John Lindner and Sue had seen 6 or 7 there. Jane has seen a Western Gerygone in her garden (6/10/2009) and Pardalotes (Striated?) have taken up residence since 11/10/2009

Ian Magee
Reported seeing large numbers of Waxlip orchids (500+)

Rod and Jan Orr
What an enormous pleasure it has been spending time in the forests around Bendigo this spring. Plants that have struggled to flower in the drought plagued previous eight or so years have flowered in abundance this year. The common orchids such as *Diuris pardina*, *Glossodia major* and *Pterostylis nutans* are flowering in numbers we haven't seen for years.
On 9.10.2009 the Axedale Flora Reserve was blue with *Thelymitra megcalyptra* and dotted with 100s of yellow *Diuris* species & hybrids. It has also been an exciting year for bird observations.

On 5.10.2009 we drove to the Terrick Terrick National Park. We travelled North through the Whipstick and Kamarooka sections of the Greater Bendigo National Park via Tennyson Rd. stopping at Burnside Rd to look at the brilliant flowering displays of Golden Pennants, Small Leaf Wax, *Micromyrtis* and *Dampiera* that were growing in the grader-scraped edges of the road. Here we had a brief sighting of what appeared to be a Black Honeyeater. Its high pitched call and rocket like flight reminded us of the birds we had seen along the Canning Stock Route in June. There they were feeding on Whickams Grevillea.

The bird sightings didn't end there because in a paddock beside the Mitiamo-Echuca Rd. we saw a Spotted Harrier flying low across the pasture, and in another paddock opposite 'Fabians Grassland Paddock' in the Terrick Terrick National Park, a Swamp Harrier was chased off by a pair of very determined Banded Plovers.

The next day we returned to Burnside Rd in the vain hope that the Black Honeyeater might appear. Instead we found that Burnside Rd. was like 'Whistler Central' as both the Rufous and Golden Whistlers were calling, and we were fortunate to both see and hear the Gilberts Whistler. We returned home via Millwood Rd. and came upon a patch of flowering Yellow Gum, *Eucalyptus leucoxylon,* by the side of the road where there were a great number of White-eared Honeyeaters and Brown-headed Honeyeaters feeding and franticly flying through these

trees. When we stopped to look closer we discovered White-fronted and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters were also present.

Further south along Millwood Rd, in the paddock opposite the City of Greater Bendigo Forestry and Pony Club entrance gateway, we saw 30+ Cockatiels feeding on the ground alongside the fence. We had seen a pair the day before at the Terricks but we were very surprised to see this many of these birds so close to Bendigo.

October General Meeting – Speaker: David Cantrill: Charles Darwin – 150 anniversary of the 'Origin of Species'.

Author: Sabine Wilkens

We were very honoured to have the Chief Botanists and Herbarium Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens come and speak to us on this topic. But what a topic! 2009 has been a big year for fans of evolutionary theory, On the 12th February, Darwin would have had his 200th birthday and in November this year, the 'Origin of Species' turns 150! (it was published in November 1859).
Much of the book is based on observations and collections conducted through Darwin's time on the *Beagle*, but it took a long time (about 20 years) to get into print.

David Cantrill chose to confine his talk largely to Darwin's time in Australia, which apparently at the time, he was not so fond of, (but got to appreciate later in his life). Darwin's impressions of Australia would have been influenced by the season (it was high summer) and by the short time he spent here (only a few weeks). In addition, the *Beagle* sailed from England in December 1931 and arrived in Port Jackson on the 12/1/1836 – over five years later. It is quite likely that all the crew, including Darwin, were homesick and generally sick of the travelling by then. They left Sydney on the 20th of January, arrived in Hobart on the 6th of February and left there on the 17th of February. They then arrived at King Georges Sound (WA) on the 6th of March and left on the 14th March, so all up, only very few weeks spent in Australia out of a voyage that lasted over five years.
When Darwin left King Georges Sound he apparently wrote this: 'Farewell Australia, you are a rising child and doubtless will reign a great princess in the South; but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect; I leave your shore without sorrow or regret.'

Darwin may not have had the best impressions here, but his scientific mind never stopped working. His great perception of the natural world was able to capture the essence of the surroundings, even in that short time. He wrote for example, 'the trees nearly all belong to one family [Myrtaceae], and mostly have the surface of their leaves placed in a vertical, instead of, as in Europe, a nearly horizontal position; the foliage is scanty and of a rather peculiar pale green tint, without any gloss. The leaves are not shed periodically….'

Darwin only visited the southern part of Australia and in that, mostly wet and dry sclerophyll-type communities and heathlands, so he missed out on the entire interior and rainforest ecosystems. What might he have made of those? As it was, he brought home a enormous collection of specimens, even from the limited areas he visited.

Such scientific collections in Darwin's time were priceless witnesses of distant lands. They allowed the taxonomic study of flora and fauna of countries you could never see and they allowed the building of networks with scientists andinstitutions all around the world. One hundred years ago, scientific collections laid the foundations of modern biology once it was recognised that all current species had common ancestors in the distant past.

Although today, collections are still incredibly valuable for many reasons, not the least being that they represent a glimpse of a time gone by, current taxonomic studies are less often based purely on morphological characters. Molecular biology that allows the genetic material of organisms to be compared, often shows us relationships never suspected. For example, the family Proteaceae, is often considered one of the ultimate ancient southern hemisphere or Gondwanan plant families. Molecular biology however, has revealed that its closest relative is the Platanaceae (the Plane tree family). To most people, this predominantly northern hemisphere family looks nothing like the Proteaceae! It is even stranger to think that the Water Lily family is both their closest relative, but this is what DNA studies have shown.

Another interesting and closely related group, as determined by their DNA, is abbreviated ANITA. This group contains the most ancestral plants and thirteen out of nineteen of its sub-groups occur in Australia. David Cantrill used the word 'primitive' for these plants, but I tend to shy away for that term as many people may associate 'primitive' with 'not so well-adapted' or 'lowly'. I would have liked to ask David whether in botanical circles 'primitive' does not have that baggage.

Who are these ancestral ANITA plants?
A = *Amborella trichopoda*, a species of plant from New Caledonia which is believed to still resemble most closely the first flowering plants on earth. It is the only living species in the entire family Amborellaceae!
N = Nymphaeaceae, the Water Lily family. This group is treated today as being neither monocot nor dicot (now called eudicot), but diverged before the two big groups evolved.
I = Illiaceae, the anis-seed family, an Asian/North-American group
T = Trimeniaceae, a small family containing one or two genera from northern Australia/ South-East Asia (related to below)
A = Austrobaileyaceae, a family with a single genus, containing only two species, both from Queensland.

...in other words, they are the sorts of plants, you look at and think 'wow – you have been around for so many millions of years...'

By the way, later in his life, Darwin expressed more interest in Australia as a place to live. While he was here, he never saw a kangaroo, but he saw a platypus. What are the chances?

This was a great talk and if David had not been the third speaker of the night, I would have asked lots more questions. There are however, terrific resources available on Darwin and his voyage and writings. Go to http://darwin-online.org.uk/ and it' all there. Be prepared to get totally immersed.

The Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills – where are they at?

by Sabine Wilkens

Kevin Walsh (City of Greater Bendigo) talked to members at the October General Meeting about the Draft Master Plan for this major project.

At this stage, input by any interested person is absolutely critical to show the City of Greater Bendigo that its residents are really interested in the Garden, and also whether they are interested in the present proposal. Extensive consultation went on (e.g. an options paper earlier this year, leaflet drop in White Hills area) to come up with the current plan, so it is expected that the community is behind it. Some major changes that needed to be supported by the public (and are supported by most people) are that the current pool will be removed and that the animals will no longer be on display.

The new garden will be much bigger and the key elements will be a number of collections (including a heritage collection, rare and threatened vegetation types and species from the Bendigo district, as well as 'edibles from dry climates'), a cast iron conservatory, a 'garden for the future' and a home demonstration garden, a restored Bendigo

Creek environment with a number of ponds, an arboretum and a children's garden and play space. Other areas set aside will be for active sports (which includes the new pool, a large oval, tennis courts and an events/training space. There will be many exotic plants in these collections, but their potential to become weeds will be evaluated before adoption in plantings. A full-time curator is part of the recommendations, as is an education and events program. With a number of schools nearby, it will be fantastic to involve children in the project at all stages.

I love the ideas behind some of the designs, although their scale will be such that they can only be properly appreciated from the air! For example the plan for the arboretum to be arranged along the two-dimensional shapes of geological striations of local gold bearing deposits, while some of the plants in the collections will be organized into formal strict grid patterns associated with gridlines of residential areas.

The costs of such a project are phenomenal, and its realisation will not happen overnight, but will take many years, so the community needs to be behind it 100%. At this stage, **PLEASE** write a letter in response to the current vision by the 27th November 2009.
The Lyttleton Terrace council offices as well as the Goldfields Library and branches have a display with the detailed plans (two volumes!) in the foyer. The draft master plan can also be accessed via the council's website at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au.

Any comments can be addressed to:
Landscape and Open Space Planning
City of Greater Bendigo
PO Box 733, Bendigo 3552.
Comments and queries can also be made by telephone (54346370) or e-mailed to info@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Finally, CGB staff will be at the current White Hills gardens from 1.00pm till 4.00pm on Saturday 7th and 14th November to answer questions and provide more information.

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, November 11 7.30pm
Eris O'Brien: 'Native locusts in native grassland'.
This meeting is preceded by the NCCMA meeting from 5-7pm (see page 3 in this issue)

Wednesday, December 9 6.30pm
Christmas Dinner – speaker to be confirmed

Excursions

Saturday 14th November
Great Dividing Trail Flora & Fauna Mapping - continued.
8.30am - Meet at the clubrooms for car pooling. Please note the earlier starting time. We will be doing the GDT between Sandhurst Reservoir and Kangaroo Gully Rd.
Bring binoculars, notebook, GPS, camera, morning tea.
Contact for any further detail: Anne Bridley 55493479.
For a report on the first excursion, see August *Whirrakee*, pages 7-9. Many interesting observations in the last few months have related to these excursions (including 'thing of the night' and the terrific front cover picture of crane flies this month)

Contact Richard Goonan (0423 418 815) if you have comments, questions or suggestions for any other excursions.

Fauna Group
This group normally meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. New and seasoned Club members are most welcome to attend.

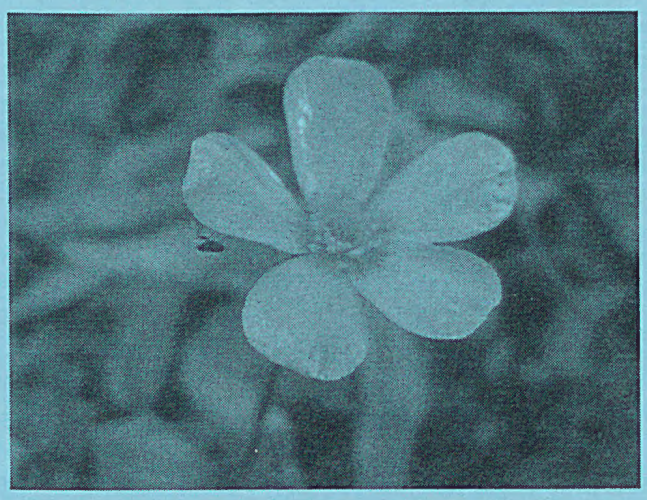
Garden Working Bee
A garden working bee has been organized for Saturday 7th November at 9am, to deal with the prolific weeds.
For details see page 3.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

Australian Naturalists' Network – Advance Notice
Sixth ANN Get-together
24 August - 4 September 2010
Host:Chinchilla FNC, Qld

Second Notice: to reserve a place, the expression of interest form and a deposit of $200 should be sent to the CFNC by 1/12 2009.
Further enquiries: Kath Truscott, email ann2010@bordernet.com.au

SEANA 2010 (15 - 18 October)
Advance Notice - based at Foster (Camp Rhumba), Wilsons Promontory Excursions planned.



The small and the very small... a buttercup species (Ranunculus) *being visited by a tiny fly (?)* *Photographer Dennis Suckling*